United Nations A/71/747–S/2017/38

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
16 January 2017

Original: English

**General Assembly**
**Seventy-first session**
Agenda item 32
**Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development**

**Security Council**
**Seventy-second year**

## Identical letters dated 12 January 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the destruction by the Russian occupation forces in Abkhazia, Georgia, of the multi-layered, archaeological and architectural monument — the settlement site, tombs and ruins of the church dating from the eighth to ninth centuries and late middle ages, as well as a graveyard from the mid-twentieth century (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 32, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Elene **Agladze**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative

17-00668 (E) 180117

Please recycle

## Annex to the identical letters dated 12 January 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

## Statement issued on 10 January 2017 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

According to Russian and Abkhaz sources, on 3 January 2017, the Russian occupation forces in the Abkhazia region destroyed the multi-layered, archaeological and architectural monument — the settlement site, tombs and ruins of a church dating from the eighth to ninth centuries and late middle ages, as well as a graveyard from the mid-twentieth century — while preparing the ground for a military shooting range in Tsebelda, Gulripshi district.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemns another act of damaging the monuments of the historical and cultural heritage of Georgia by the occupation regime as an act directed against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and calls upon the Russian Federation to desist from the practice of damaging and destroying Georgian cultural monuments in the occupied territories. This illegal act once again demonstrates the grave military and humanitarian situation in the occupied territories of Georgia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia warns the Russian Federation that the intentional damage inflicted to the cultural heritage sites violates the provisions of international humanitarian law, notably the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, as well as the principles of the 2003 Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The Ministry also calls upon the international community, UNESCO and other international organizations to duly assess the illegal actions of the Russian Federation and to spare no efforts to save and protect historical and cultural heritage in the occupied territories of Georgia.